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File

June 9, 1981

~~MEMORANDUM TO: CA~~ Ambassador Diego C. Asencio

THRU: CA/OCS - Mr. Louis P. Goelz

FROM: CA/OCS/EMR - James L. Ward

SUBJECT: Conversation with Mrs. John Sullivan, Sr.

Mrs. Sullivan contacted me by telephone June 8, obviously upset. After listening to her for several minutes, there appeared to be two main issues which prompted her to call.

First she believes that you have not completed your commitment to her regarding her request that Secretary Haig personally telephone or otherwise contact President Duarte regarding her missing son. I explained to her that, although you had promised to get back in touch with her after seeing if her request was possible, in your conversation with Ambassador Enders he indicated that he had some problems with the approach and had suggested the alternative of having Ambassador Hinton raise the matter with President Duarte during his first round of calls. I stated you had Ambassador Enders return the call not because you were avoiding her but because you decided she was entitled to talk to the official who had recommended this alternative course of action. She stated that Ambassador Enders had not mentioned you or any conversation with you, that he had not explained exactly why he was calling, and that she did not understand that this was in response to her conversation with you. I pointed out to her that in an effort to make sure there was no misunderstanding of this kind, Mr. Martinez had explained to her daughter, Donna, in one of his daily calls that Ambassador Enders' conversation with Mrs. Sullivan was in place of a return call from you. I also mentioned that we had explained this to Congresswoman Roukema's office in our efforts to keep them posted on the case.

Mrs. Sullivan stated that Ambassador Enders had promised her that Ambassador Hinton would contact her as soon as he had raised John's case with President Duarte and that she had not heard from Ambassador Hinton. I told her I was

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certain that Ambassador Hinton would be raising this with President Duarte at the first appropriate opportunity and would be in touch with her.

She went on at some length about the family's disappointment over the lack of any direct response from the White House to their letters or those of their supporters. I explained to her again that the White House was aware of the case, they did feel that the responsibility for the case appropriately rested with us and that their actions should not be interpreted as a slight or a lack of concern but simply their effort to keep the case in the most appropriate channel.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Although I believe the rather lengthly conversation was a form of release for Mrs. Sullivan and that she was probably reassured somewhat, I would recommend that you telephone her to confirm that your reason for having Ambassador Enders return the call was meant to provide her with the opportunity to discuss the issue with him first hand and that you remain highly concerned and actively involved in John's case. We are also requesting the desk to pursue with Ambassador Hinton the promised approach to President Duarte in an effort to see that it takes place as soon as possible.

Mrs. Sullivan is available at her home after 2:30 p.m. almost every week day. Her telephone number is 201-343-2661. I will be happy to come up and provide you with backup during the call should you decide to make it.

cc: CA-REFritts
CA/OCS/EMR-EMartinez (Sullivan File)

CA/OCS/EMR-JLWard:rgr
JLWard:rgr

CA/OCS/EMR-EMartinez

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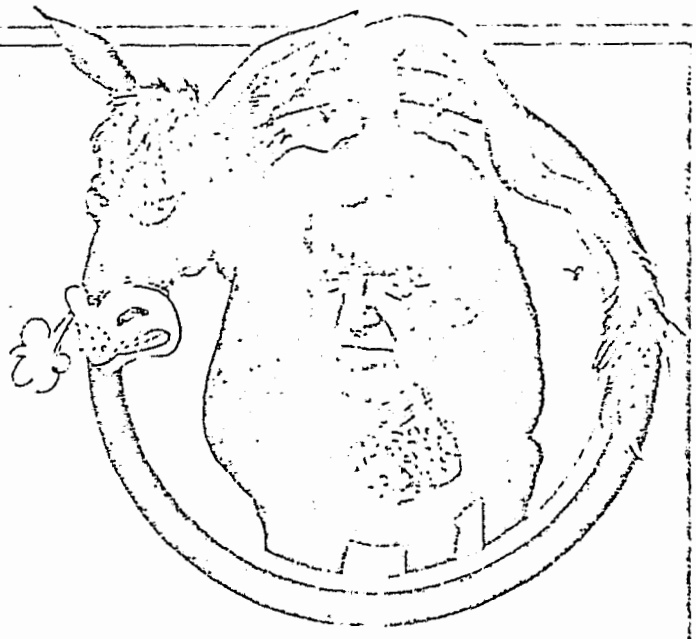

ASSHOLE OF THE MONTH

EDMUND MUSKIE

What would you say about a high government official who didn't give a shit about the life of an American abroad? Some might say he should be thrown out of office, others might suggest he be hauled into court. When we learned of former Secretary of State Edmund Muskie's unforgivable actions, our response was to name him "Asshole of the Month." How did Muskie's vile abuse of office occur? To understand that, you have to know more about Mr. Muskie.

This political hack from Maine has been in the public eye almost as long as smog. The press loves to talk about his rough, Lincoln-like looks, his rugged Yankee individualism and his straightforward honesty. Of course, there have been moments in Ed's career when some of these traits evaporated. For instance, at a 1972 press conference he cried like a baby because terrible people had been making nasty comments about his wife. Since he was running for President at the time, many Americans thought his performance indicated a certain weakness. They were right.

When Cyrus Vance got pissed off by Jimmy Carter's bungled attempt to rescue the hostages in Iran, he stepped down from his post as Secretary of State. Trying to cover his ass, Carter wanted a replacement who looked tough, had a reputation for not making waves, and could talk a good game.

And so America, which had known distinguished Secretaries of State like Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Daniel Webster, Cordell Hull and Henry Kissinger, now had in charge of its foreign policy a man who looked like Abe Lincoln but cried like Mary Lincoln. Some veteran politicians were concerned over Muskie's appointment, because of his limited expertise in sensitive world affairs.

One duty of the State Department is to protect the rights and life of an American citizen when he or she travels abroad. That's a tough job, and you need someone as Secretary of State who is a firm, dedicated boss, one whose attitude drifts down to the lowliest employee. If the boss doesn't give a shit, who will?

Later in this issue (beginning on page 36) you'll read about John J. Sullivan Jr., a writer sent by HUSTLER to El Salvador to report on that nation's civil war. When he disappeared, his family naturally turned to the State Department for help, believing this government agency cared about Americans abroad.

After dozens of agonizing phone calls to the White House, to the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador and to the State Department, the Sullivans found themselves in a painful situation. Meeting with foot-dragging and the bureaucratic shuffle at every turn, it became obvious the State Department was not very concerned about the missing journalist. Why? Because the Secretary of State himself didn't even know Sullivan was missing!

When Muskie finally broke down and called the Sullivans on January 13, 1981—16 days after John had vanished, and after they threatened to tell their tale to the press—the Secretary of State was rude and intimidating. He was obsessed with learning the identity of a confidential informant who had told the family that only "world pressures" could bring about a response from the Salvadoran junta. That's right, no words of consolation, no sympathy, no support—just anger over the Sullivans' refusal to reveal their source.

When John's mother got on the phone, she said, "I'm appealing to you as one New Englander to another, and as one parent to another. Please help me find my son."

Muskie's incredible response was, "Do you think your son is the only person who this has happened to?"

Mrs. Sullivan couldn't believe her ears, so she put her daughter, Donna Lyon, on the phone. This time Muskie said, "Do you realize that you have ruined my night's sleep with this frustrating phone call?" Wearily, he agreed to personally call El Salvador's President Jose Napoleon Duarte to see what could be done. But Muskie never bothered to follow through on his promise.

We wonder if Muskie ever had the decency to think about the sleepless nights the Sullivans had experienced while agonizing over John's fate? We wonder why it took him more than two weeks to find out what dozens of newspapers had already reported—that an American was missing in a war zone. But most important, we wonder why an office as important as Secretary of State was ever given to anyone who didn't give a damn about the basic, old-fashioned virtue of compassion. The way Muskie treated the Sullivans in their hour of gravest need qualifies him as the ultimate Asshole. We wonder how he sleeps at night now, knowing he could have personally helped one missing American—but didn't.

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l Identifies El Salvador Dead

Faces Human Rights Group With Daily Photo Task

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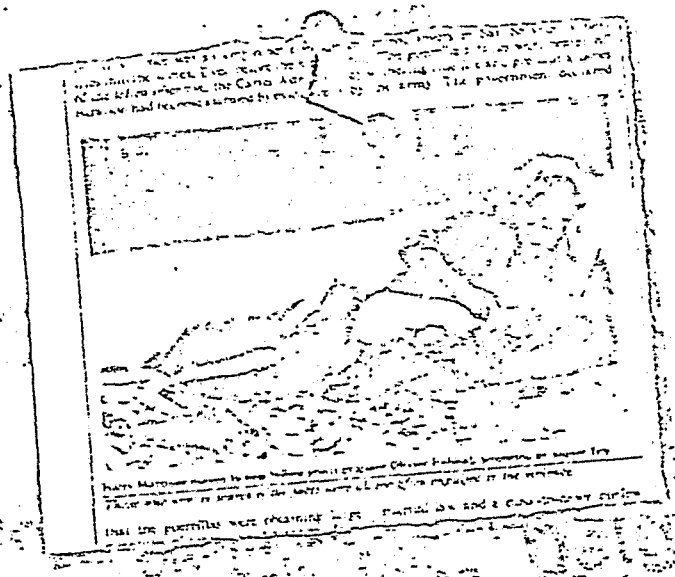
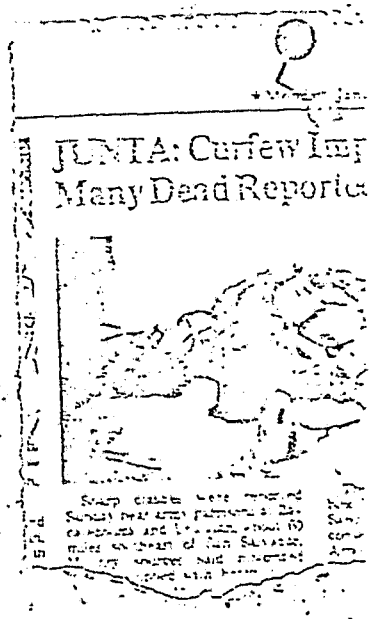
Inside Reporter Reveals a Bloody Reagan Plot

The scene last Christmas at the modest, middle-class home in Bergenfield, New Jersey, could have been a replica of a Norman Rockwell painting. While snowflakes gently fell outside and tree lights twinkled, four generations of a hardworking Irish-American family gathered around a dining-room table laden with roast turkey, candied yams and eight varieties of homemade pies. Earlier in the day they all had attended Mass and prayed at near-

REPORT BY RICHARD WARREN LEWIS





Illustrations by Roger Bergendorff

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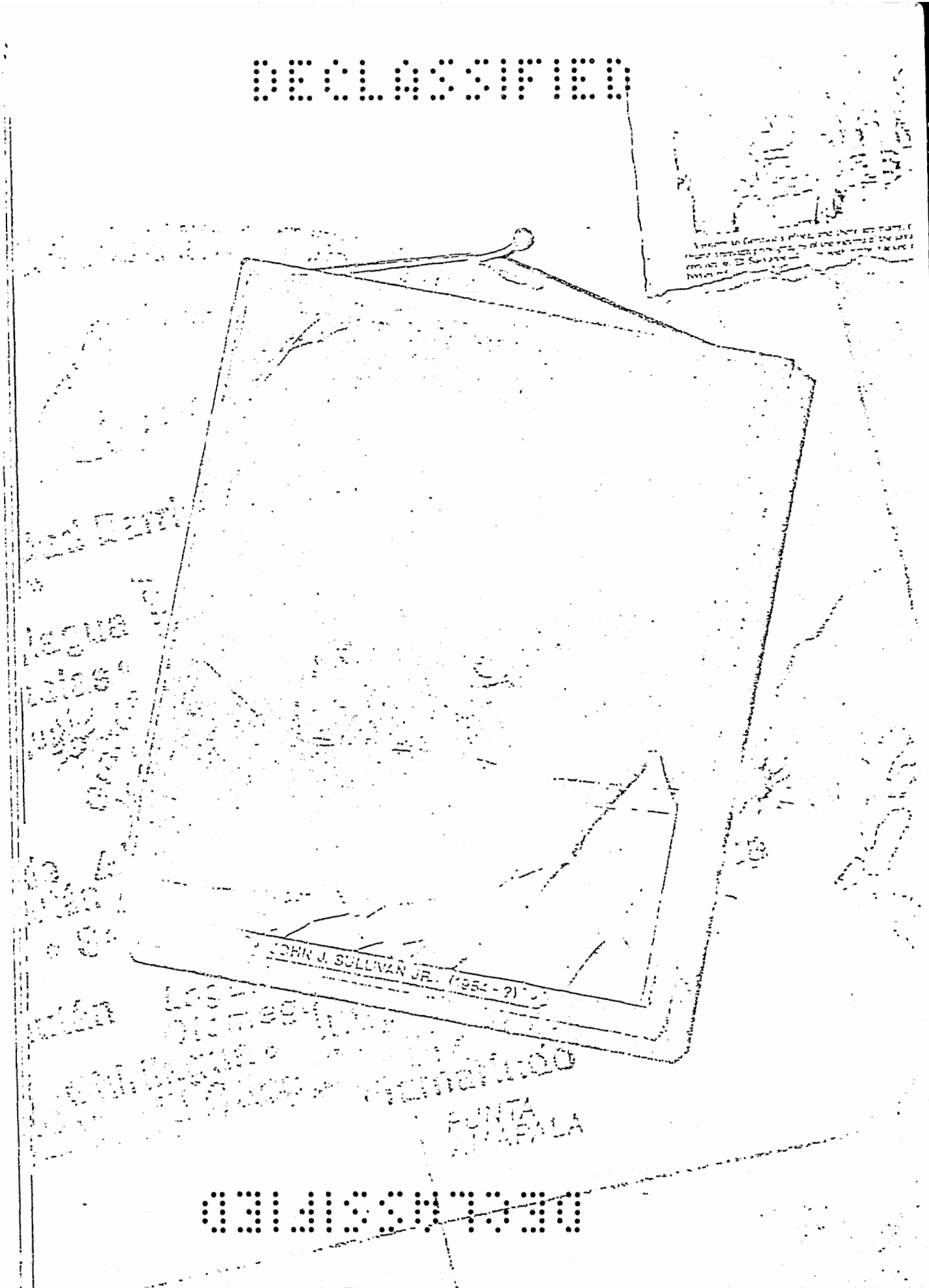

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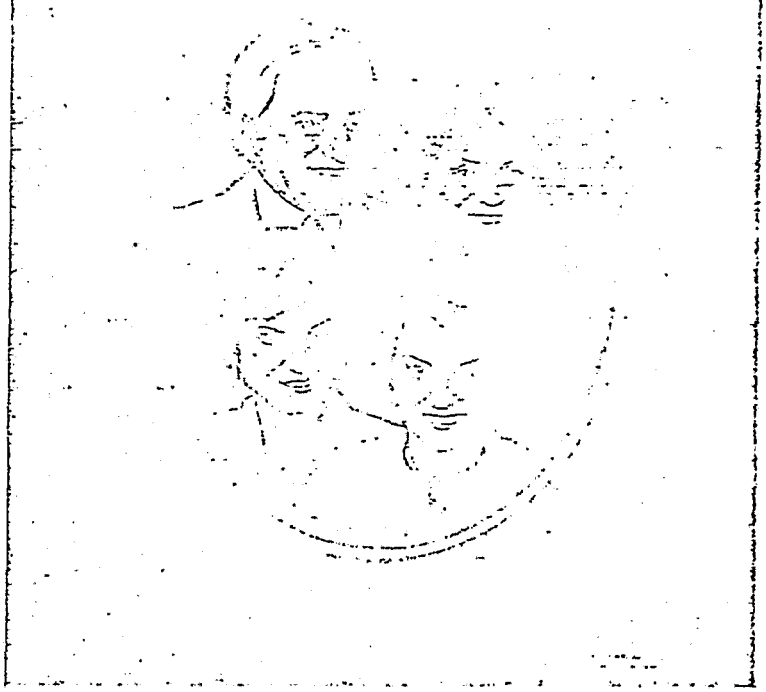
power with his opinions.

"Be careful, John," he said, putting an arm around the shoulder of his bearded, 26-year-old namesake. "From what I've been reading in the papers, it's pretty dangerous in El Salvador."

"I'm not going there to be a hero, Dad," John Jr. replied. "I just want to get the story."

In just three days the former Bogota (New Jersey) High School football and baseball letterman would be embarking on perhaps the greatest challenge of his five-year career as a journalist. Fearful that the barbaric civil war in the remote Central American nation could become the next Vietnam, HUSTLER was sending Sullivan to El Salvador to write an investigative report.



The Sullivan family (clockwise from top left): John J. Sullivan Sr. and his wife Lorraine, and the writer's two sisters, Donna Igoe and Debbie Indrieri

The devastating conflict had left more than 13,000 dead during the preceding 12 months, many of them victims of horrible atrocities. Sullivan planned to interview key figures on all sides of a power struggle that had torn apart the poverty-stricken republic, roughly the size of Massachusetts.

There would be meetings with members of the ruling military-civilian junta, which the United States had already backed with $60 million in military and economic aid. In addition, he hoped to gain access to guerrilla leaders on the Left, who were allegedly receiving arms from Communist regimes overseas. And, if possible, he also wanted to develop information about right-wing extremist death squads, which had murdered men, women and children in cold blood.

Clearly El Salvador was a major story, and Sullivan—who had previously filed incisive reports on the 1979 revolution in nearby Nicaragua—was anxious to pursue it. He expressed only one concern. He wanted to arrive in the troubled nation before dusk, when it was still relatively safe to travel.

At Newark Airport on the morning of December 28 he took a gold chain from around his neck and gave it to his father. "Wear it until I get back," he told him as the two men embraced. In turn, he kissed his mother and his two married sisters, Donna Igoe and Debbie Indrieri. "Don't worry about a thing," he assured them. "I can take care of myself."

• • •

As he stepped from TACA Airlines Flight #311 at 5 p.m. (EDT), Sullivan noticed the heavy security at El Salvador's isolated new International Airport. A guard with an automatic rifle strapped to his belt stood by while customs inspectors pawed through the writer's luggage. Armed soldiers stood at the entrance, pacing in front of beige Mayan frescoes.

A battered taxi took Sullivan on the hour-long ride to the capital city of San Salvador, passing clusters of peasants waiting for buses, wooden-wheeled ox carts filled with sugarcane, and the place along the highway where three American nuns and a Catholic lay worker had been found brutally murdered and raped only 25 days earlier. News photographers called the road "the body run"; they went there almost daily to shoot pictures of corpses left from violence of the night before.

At 6:25 p.m. Sullivan walked into the carpeted lobby of the fashionable Sheraton Hotel. "My name is John Sullivan," he told the desk clerk in perfect Spanish. "I have a reservation."

[illegible] with American dollars. Even before unpacking his typewriter, tape recorder and camera equipment, Sullivan stood on that balcony—taking in the view of the proud volcano, San Salvador, in the distance and the panorama of the modern high-rise city beneath it. And once again he reviewed what he already knew about the turmoil in this strategic nation situated on the Pacific Ocean, and how the incredible events of the past 14 months had affected its 4.8 million inhabitants.

This wasn't the first time civil strife had torn apart the most densely populated country in Latin America. Back in 1932 more than 30,000 peasants were killed by the Army over demands for better living and working conditions. Yet everyday life for the overwhelming majority of Salvadorans had improved little since then.

By 1979 almost 40% of the population was living under a feudal agricultural system dominated by 14 families—known as *Los Catorce*—that maintained a stranglehold on the nation's economy. A mere 2% of the population controlled 60% of the prime agricultural property, which produced such valuable cash crops as cotton, sugar and the nation's biggest moneymaker, coffee. "El Salvador is the fourth-largest coffee producer in the world.

Peasants not working on the large coffee plantations were crowded onto deforested and overworked farms, where they lived in mud huts and cardboard shacks. The infant mortality rate was 55 for every 1,000 live births, twice as high as Cuba's and four times the rate in the United States. Subsisting on a diet of corn and beans, the average citizen received only 82% of the recommended minimum caloric intake needed for survival.

A tragic number of Salvadoran children suffering from malnutrition and chronic diarrhea wandered aimlessly in hundreds of isolated villages lacking electricity and water. More than 95% of the peasants were functionally illiterate. Unemployment stood at well over 30%, and those who did work aver-

EL SALVADOR

[illegible] well before arriving in El Salvador. Its short-term goal: a group of reform-minded junior Army officers had engineered a bloodless coup on October 15, 1979, ending a most 50 years of iron-handed military rule by overthrowing the dictatorship of General Carlos Humberto Romero. In his place a five-man civilian-military junta promised to eliminate the vast inequalities in distribution of wealth.

One of the earliest supporters of the junta was the Carter Administration, well aware of El Salvador's strategic location in the Western Hemisphere. One concerned embassy official called the nation "a flaming arrow pointing at the heart of Kansas."

Anxious to avoid a repeat of Communist takeovers in Cuba and Nicaragua—events Washington viewed as threats to American security—the United States began sending financial aid to the junta, along with economic advisers. Chief among these was Roy L. Prosterman, a U.S. land-reform expert who 20 years earlier had masterminded the ill-fated agrarian-reform program in Vietnam.

In March 1980, with much fanfare, the junta announced the most sweeping land-redistribution scheme ever attempted in Latin America. In its first stage all properties in excess of 1,250 acres would be expropriated by the government to form peasant cooperatives. The second stage would do the same to properties ranging from 250 to 500 acres. And finally, 80,000 peasant [illegible] was designed to weaken the power of a tiny class of wealthy landowners. But more important, it would prevent the appeal of leftist guerrillas by transferring nearly 2 million acres to peasants, including the 2,000 largest estates in the country, and some 150,000 small plots of land.

Understandably, the old powers balked to hold on. But rather than using the chambers of the constitutional assembly, the combatants turned to the alleys and streets of El Salvador's cities and towns. Sometimes it was difficult to keep track of who was killing whom.

Financed by deposed landowners and conservative businessmen relocated in Florida and Mexico, right-wing death squads carried out a mindless reign of terror, picking off union leaders and activists—not to mention totally innocent citizens. Among their hundreds of victims were four doctors whose mistake was treating patients in refugee camps. Yet not one suspected death-squad operative has even been apprehended. The simple reason: Its ranks are composed of members of the Army, police and National Guard.

The junta, in the meantime, sought to consolidate its power by continuing the repressive methods of the dictatorship it replaced. Anyone was fair game in its program of random search-and-destroy violence—helpless students, teachers and factory workers in the cities, unarmed peasants in the countryside and, once in a while, even some real anti-government guerrillas. When accused of these crimes, the junta shrugged its col-

[illegible] Party politicians, [illegible] Catholic Church, labor unions, intellectuals and—yes—one Communist-oriented group. To fight government injustices, they had all banded together as the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front—named for martyred leader of the abortive 1932 uprising. The acts of terror performed by its more fanatical members differed only slightly from those of the junta. Insurgent guerrillas usually left victims where they fell, while junta forces tried to cover up their misdeeds by burying the bodies.

No wonder that El Salvador had become an armed camp where even the most composed citizens packed weapons and wore bulletproof vests. The sound of machine-gun bursts, Molotov cocktails and sniper fire raking across the capital city were considered routine.

But curiously, as Sullivan stood on his room's balcony this night in late December, all he could hear were the sounds of music reverberating from the Sheraton Hotel's popular roller disco. It was as if the ugly events punctuating the intervening nine months—episodes that had led to martial law and suspension of basic constitutional rights—simply had never occurred.

One of these events involved Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, who courageously condemned tyranny and terrorism from his pulpit. A champion of nonviolence and human rights, he begged President Carter to refrain from sending proposed U.S. military aid and thus escalating the military conflict. His concern for the poor made him

Slaughter in the Streets

For the masses of El Salvador the [illegible] was a bad exception to [illegible]. The [illegible] on a [illegible] small group [illegible] (2) On the highway is the corpse [illegible] girls—victims of right-wing death squads. (3) In the mirror

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[illegible] "If God [illegible] sacrifice, I [illegible] will be a seed of liberty and a sign of hope."

On April 1, 1980, celebrating a memorial Mass in the chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence, Romero stepped to the altar and raised a chalice of Communion wine. Suddenly a lone gunman appeared in the open door of the chapel and fired a single .22-caliber fragmenting bullet. The archbishop's blood streaked the white altar cloth as he fell to the floor, mortally wounded. The junta had struck again.

Six days later Romero's funeral in the center of San Salvador was transformed into a tableau of horror by exploding hand bombs that stampeded the crowd of 50,000. Right-wing sharpshooters began firing from the government's National Palace across the square, drawing wild return fire from armed leftist guards protecting the mourners. When the smoke cleared an hour later, 35 people had been shot or trampled to death, and 185 others were hospitalized.

As friction intensified during the next several months, bloodthirsty terrorist bands openly roamed the sweltering countryside, killing peasants. On July 9, in a typical incident, 31 innocent members of the Mojica Santos family—residing in the poor village of Mogotes—were shot to death by the right-wing paramilitary organization ORDEN, a group affiliated with the National Guard. Fifteen children, all of them under ten years of age, were murdered while hugging their mothers. Later that same day, soldiers and agents of the [illegible] peasants who had accepted redistributed land. In July, government troops murdered the president and seven other members of the El Peñon agricultural cooperative. The remaining cooperative members were forced to pay the local military commander $50 a month for protection, plus $180 for the soldiers' salaries. According to an Institute for Agrarian Transformation employee, more than 80 cooperatives were being forced to pay protection money.

On another occasion more than 20 men in National Guard uniforms drove into the Aguacate cooperative, carrying a list of co-op leaders they considered to be subversives. After 12 of them were executed, the 160 families living there fled in panic.

Back in the cities, teachers-union leaders and teachers themselves were special targets for assassination. Many of them were murdered in classrooms while students watched in horror. Terrorist bombings and bazooka attacks at universities in San Salvador multiplied.

The controlled Salvadoran press described these and other escalations in hostilities between the military and its opposition simply as "disturbances." People on the street pointed to the local newspapers and muttered, "*Mentiras!*"—meaning "lies."

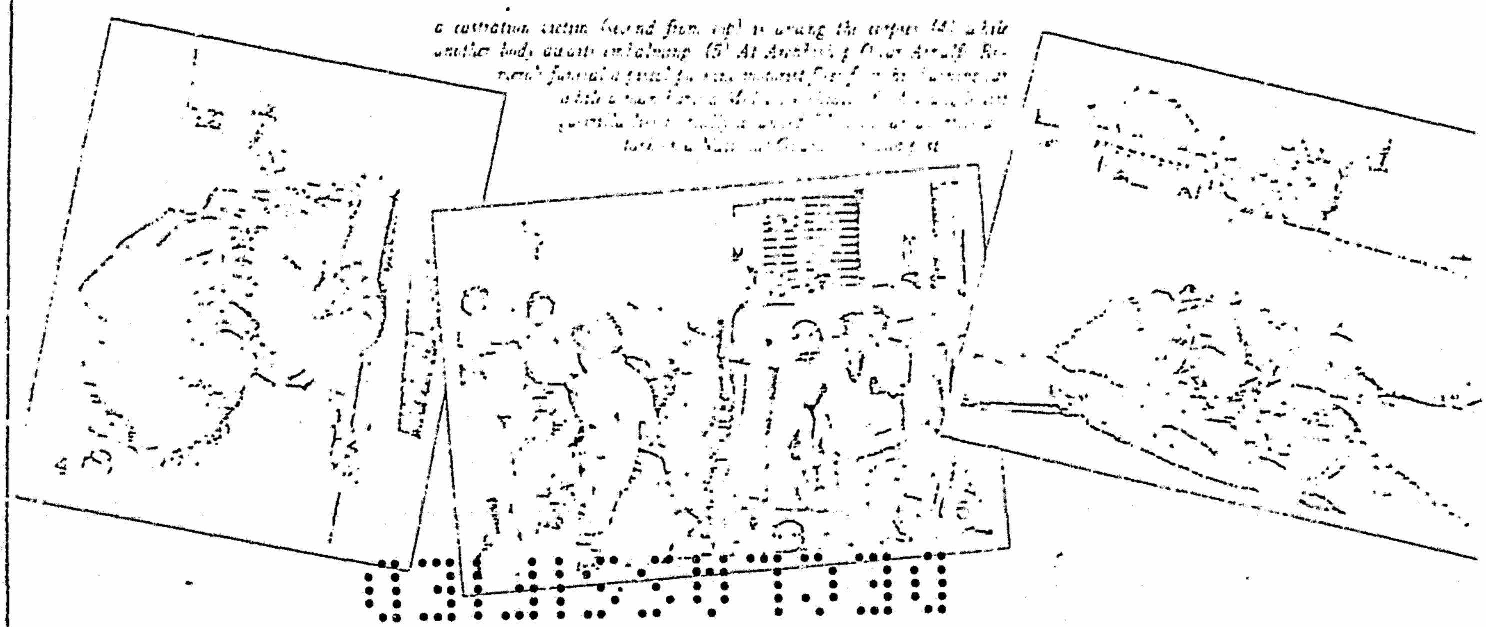
A month before John Sullivan arrived in El Salvador, savage violence stunned the nation once again. While 200 Army troops surrounded a Jesuit school meeting hall and helicopters circled overhead, heavily armed members of a right- [illegible] tortured before being executed. M[illegible] them were opponents of the junta, b[illegible] none was a guerrilla leader. The blood bath was viewed as part of the [illegible] all-out effort to eradicate opposition.

The following day a powerful bomb exploded just outside San Salvador's Metropolitan Cathedral—not far from the Sheraton Hotel—where the slain leftists' bodies were lying in state. At least nine persons suffered serious injuries. The same assassination squad claimed responsibility for the attack.

Sullivan lay down on one of his room's twin beds and recalled the most recent acts of violence that had shaken the nation: the murder of the three Maryknoll nuns and one lay missionary. They had been instrumental in setting up several of the 11 refugee camps handling the thousands of displaced peasants spilling into the city from the countryside. Each had been shot in the head, and at least two were raped. Uniformed government troops had tried to cover up their deaths by burying them in a primitive roadside grave.

Expressing shock and dismay, President Carter temporarily suspended all financial aid to El Salvador. To placate Washington, the junta reorganized its leadership for the fourth time since taking over in 1979. It installed politician Jose Napoleon Duarte as a figurehead president, while Colonel Jose Guillermo Garcia, Minister of Defense and Public Security, retained actual power.

While the ongoing complexities of the political and economic struggle in El



a castration victim (second from right) is among the corpses (4) while another body awaits embalming. (5) At Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero's funeral [illegible]

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[illegible] and changed [illegible] At approximately [illegible] room—presumably to have a drink in the bar adjacent to the Sheraton's well-guarded main lobby.

Shortly after 6 o'clock on the evening of January 6, John's mother picked up the ringing telephone at the Sullivans' New Jersey home. Lorraine Sullivan's knees trembled and her heart sank as she heard someone on the New York cable desk of United Press International saying that her son had vanished in El Salvador. Nobody had seen him since the night of December 28.

His disappearance into the bowels of the civil war had been discovered in the wake of three murders that had occurred at the Sheraton two nights earlier. A pair of professional hitmen had nonchalantly strolled through the hotel's lobby, walked into the coffee shop and gunned down Jose Rodolfo Viera—president of the Institute for Agrarian Transformation—and Mark Pearlman and Michael Hammer, two American Federation of Labor lawyers who had been helping to implement the reform program. Con[illegible]

[illegible] discovered that Sullivan's bed had not been slept in since the night he checked into the Sheraton. His typewriter, camera and tape recorder—along with a well-thumbed Spanish-English dictionary and several candy bars—were cataloged in a subsequent search of his room.

Once the shock of Sullivan's disappearance wore off, his family could only speculate about what might have happened. Had he made contact with left-wing guerrillas and accompanied one of their representatives for an interview away from the hotel? Unlikely, since the tools of his trade had been left behind.

Had he been victimized by a common criminal, with robbery as the motive? They prayed that wasn't the case.

Had the junta kidnapped Sullivan to make him an example? A distinct possibility. The family would later learn the regime had never shown any particular hospitality to members of the media covering the civil war. Junta officials had made numerous statements accusing the foreign press of lying about daily events and stating that freelance

[illegible] "leaving on assignment had been a [illegible] wishing a staff member "cheers a[nd] happy holidays."

What next transpired were weeks [of] frustrating, futile and often agoniz[ing] attempts—both by HUSTLER exec[u]tives and the Sullivan family—to loca[te] the journalist. Working long and ma[ny] nights, the editors sought to marsh[al] support of the news media in an attem[pt] to force action on the part of appropri[ate] government agencies. Dozens of ph[one] interviews were conducted with ne[ws]papers, wire services, magazines a[nd] radio stations. A series of televised pr[ess] conferences was held in HUSTLER's L[os] Angeles offices. Scores of long-distan[ce] calls were made to the State Depa[rt]ment, the U.S. Embassy in San Sal[va]dor, the International Red Cross [(]Switzerland[)], Amnesty Internation[al], the United Nations, the Organizatio[n of] American States, and the Natio[nal] Council of Churches.

A bilingual HUSTLER staffer sp[oke] directly with Colonel Jose Guiller[mo] Garcia—El Salvador's Minister of D[e]fense and Public Security—seek[ing] information on what measures his g[ov]ernment was taking.

"We have conducted an investi[ga]tion," Garcia said. "He checked into [the] hotel, went out and never return[ed]. Instructions have been given to all m[ili]tary bodies to detect any clue to [his] whereabouts."

When asked about the seriousnes[s of] the conflict in El Salvador, Garcia [re]plied: "News often gets twisted in [this] country. Most people think we ar[e in] total war. [But actually] the s[...] action from both sides [the Right [and] the Left] is trying to make this gov[ern]ment unstable. There are big inter[ests] trying to get us in trouble, and t[hi]s could be the circumstances of [the dis]pearance of] Mr. Sullivan."

Larry Cox, a spokesman for Amne[sty] International—the Nobel Peace Pr[ize]-winning human-rights organizatio[n—] warned that Garcia's remarks sho[uld] be taken with a grain of salt. Cox [in]sisted the colonel's security for[ces] were directly responsible for at [least] 75% of the murders during the prev[ious] 12 months, figures supported by [El] Salvador's Catholic Church and [Hu]man Rights Commission.

Continued on page

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...San Salvador. "Four [illegible] ...and [illegible] ...the army, police and terrorists."

Amnesty International also noted junta responsibility for the 50 foreign journalists either kidnapped, detained, shot and killed at roadblocks, fired on with machine guns, reported or secretly executed over a [illegible] period. "Unarmed American, Mexican and Dutch reporters have become targets of security forces," said Cox. The regime in power clearly was doing everything possible to suppress responsible dissemination of the news.

Amnesty International's revelations prompted HUSTLER to ask the U.S. State Department to request an International Red Cross search of El Salvador's prisons in the hope of finding Sullivan. The State Department did nothing to implement that request. Later, U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Howard Lane brushed aside any possibility Sullivan might have been jailed. "The police told us they didn't have him, and that's good enough for us," he snapped.

Out of concern for their safety, HUSTLER Publisher Larry Flynt immediately rejected the embassy's reward suggestion. He stopped the presses of the magazine's April issue and withdrew "El Salvador: Welcome to Vietnam," his potentially controversial *Fact Sheet Five* statement condemning the U.S. government's escalating involvement in the country's affairs. In part it read:

"I thought Washington had learned a lesson in Vietnam. After hundreds of thousands of useless deaths, and billions of wasted dollars that helped create this country's current recession, you'd think the big boys would think twice about getting involved in one of the developing countries. No such luck! Once again we're sending military aid to a country whose government is at war with its own people. . . .

"Ignoring the problems we have right here at home, which are enough to make the strongest man crack, we're heading down the same stupid bloody road to

...with its typical blatant disregard for human life and for morality.

"So far we've pumped more than $11.5 million in military aid to El Salvador. But here's the neat part, folks—it's not 'lethal aid.' No gun trucks, flak jackets, bullets, grenades, gas masks, night vision sights, image intensifiers, radios, field telephones, communications equipment. That's what the Salvadoran army needs to move faster, shoot straighter and hone in on their ultimate targets—their fellow countrymen.

"But we don't stop there. Our government has begun training Salvadoran officers in Panama, in a program designed to deal with guerrilla warfare. Does that sound familiar? It should, because that's the same bullshit package we took in Vietnam. . . .

"Once again we are flexing our muscles to help murderers thousands of miles away. Once again we are running the risk of dividing our already troubled and sick society. And once again we are sticking our noses where they damn well don't belong.

"What makes my blood boil," he concluded, "is how our government and our military can so easily forget. Vietnam is soaked with our young people's blood. Let's all make sure El Salvador won't be."

While efforts continued to expose both governments' foot-dragging in the Sullivan matter, HUSTLER arranged for Stuart Wasserman—another journalist already on the scene—to send firsthand reports from the beleaguered country. One of his earliest dispatches recounted some of the brutalities and atrocities committed by the junta's security forces:

"A visitor does not have to venture into the streets to see the day-to-day horror story that is San Salvador. No neighborhood is exempt from the blood-stained sidewalks where moments before a student, priest, doctor, laborer, teacher or unemployed youth might have [illegible].

"Early one morning, in a middle-class area, a young hotel worker motioned me over to the body of a middle-aged man lying faceup across the sidewalk. A group of people was looking at one side of his head, and as I approached the body, I found out why. The man had no left side of his face anymore, just a bloody sunken cavern where his eye, cheek and ear should have been. Two

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[illegible] with white walls and a [illegible] or. The dead are kept there for 24 [illegible] for [illegible] There are [illegible] or [illegible] but sometimes there are as many [illegible] corpses stacked in the small space. [illegible] young woman who works in the [illegible] records department complains [illegible] stench from decomposing bodies [illegible] drifts into her office.

"The ambulance drivers were unloading the morning's cargo when I walked out—six bodies found on the outskirts of town, all of them appearing to be about 20 years of age or under. The back of one boy's head was missing. The bicep muscle of another was split open where he was hit by a fragmenting bullet. A woman was lying on a wooden slab, her wrist broken backward, and dried intestines settled into place where her stomach had been cut. Another young man had three knife wounds through his throat.

[illegible] And [illegible] and we will go to heaven. A priest told me that."

Wasserman, HUSTLER's man in San Salvador, later [illegible] a report received in the press headquarters at the El Camino Real Hotel. There had been a shootout in Mexicanos, a poor barrio on the outskirts of the capital city.

"About ten feet outside the door to the morgue we came across the grisly heap of 22 bodies," he said. "Most of the victims were shot in the head. The women had their blouses removed before they were killed, and their pants had been pulled down to their knees. One woman had a slit across her stomach, and her guts were hanging out. The Army claimed it had killed these people in a gunfight. But the next morning the coroner said they had all died at close range, and every woman had been raped before she was murdered." Later it was determined that none of the victims were armed, nor had they offered any resistance.

A photographer with El Salvador's [illegible] "[illegible] the Devil's [illegible]" he [illegible] "[illegible] were [illegible] between 14 and [illegible] years [illegible] It was [illegible]rible to see these children whose hea[ds] had practically been destroyed by hi[gh-]powered guns. To get a decent picture [I] had to turn their heads around to [see] what facial features [illegible]

"I have also seen [illegible] mutilated, with throats cut out of their hea[ds]. I will never forget one young woman found in a barrio in San [Salva]dor. S[he] was the only one of 15 corpses that ha[d] not been beheaded. The skin around this woman's face had been [illegible] off and peeled over her head [illegible] could see her bones. She must have b[een] tortured while she was still alive [be]cause she was shot in the temple, [and] there were powder burns visible on [the] skull bone. The person who did [it] must have been a sadist [illegible] who specializes in torture."

Other documented reports confir[m a] sickening range of atrocities similar [to] those that happened in Vietnam. M[en's] testicles are tied with a cord that [is] attached to a suspended pitcher. [The] pitcher is slowly filled with water [and] its increasing weight makes the [pain] unbearable. Castrated bodies have b[een] routinely discovered, along with oth[ers] whose eyes have been gouged out.

To obtain information on guer[rilla] activities, government interrogators [in]sert electroshock devices into the op[en]ings of penises and inside vagi[nas]. Those fortunate enough to survive [are] left sexually incapacitated. Preg[nant] women have well-developed fetuses [cut] out of their wombs and are then m[ur]dered. Peasant women have been f[ound] with severed heads placed in [their] crotches and their hands chopped [off]. Security forces have executed pris[oners] of both sexes whose hands or th[umbs] were tied together.

"They kill after sometimes unim[ag]inable torture," reported Beth Nis[sen, a] journalist covering the war for N[ews]*week*. "A woman told us about a [illegible] year-old girl who disappeared [illegible] mother asked officials to invest[igate]. The body was found two or three [days] later, shot through the head. [The] mother did not want to see the body [but] asked to see a copy of the cor[oner's] report. [It] described her body as th[at of] a young woman in [an] advanced st[age of] pregnancy. The mother said, "W[illegible]

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[illegible] Sullivan [illegible] Paul's [illegible] it has been an hour at [illegible] That's an example of the kind of incredible perversity that is going on for political effect."

Added a U.S. Embassy officer: "This is a war without prisoners. Everyone suffers."

Back in New Jersey the Sullivan family was undergoing an ordeal of its own as apathy and red tape blocked virtually every one of its efforts to get the U.S. government—or anyone else—to act in John's behalf.

On January 8 the family was told by embassy official Howard Lane that Sullivan was not a priority and to have no illusions about the search being conducted by Salvadoran police. He advised them that John could be the victim of a civilian crime and already buried. Sheraton Hotel officials, meanwhile, were holding the missing journalist's personal belongings "hostage" until they received $240—the equivalent of eight days' payment for his room.

On January 12 the family [illegible] and he said [illegible] at the National Security Office in Washington, D.C. He hung up the phone rather than hear them out.

On January 13 the Sullivans grew somewhat optimistic following a meeting with a confidential source—someone who had recently returned from El Salvador. He told them Sullivan possibly was being held in Cre[illegible] Vides Casanova Prison or one of three detention camps. He also indicated several other people had disappeared on the night of December 28, but John was the only American.

Some of the others, who were badly beaten, were said to have been released after extreme pressure was put on the junta by family members. The source went on to say that if Sullivan was a prisoner and a public plea was made in his behalf by President Carter or a high-ranking U.S. official, his release would be sure to follow if he was still alive. Perhaps because it feared embarrassing the junta, the Carter Administration

[illegible]

[illegible] is happening to its citizens is truly [illegible] breaking to a man who was brought [illegible] with very high [illegible] as an [illegible] citizen. The latest affront from the C[illegible] Administration was in the press [illegible] Leonard Le[illegible]w who gave simply [illegible] up the phone on one of my daughter[illegible] am sure you find this hard to be[illegible] yet it is true. Surely we are still a gov[illegible]ment of the people, by the people for the people. I was taught this, a[illegible] would like to believe it. It is time [illegible] something be done [illegible] the pain [illegible] family is experiencing. We must [illegible] entitled to more than lip service. W[illegible] you expect any less for your childr[illegible]

On the night of January 15, af[illegible] week of trying, the Sullivans were fi[illegible] able to make contact with Secretar[illegible] State Edmund Muskie. "All requests [illegible] denied until we advised we would [illegible] no alternative but to go to the press [illegible] concerning the lack of assistance offere[illegible] the United States." Donna [illegible]goe not[illegible] her daily log. "A call is finally rece[illegible] from Secretary Muskie, who is, in [illegible] opinion, very rude and arrogant. He [illegible]gins the conversation by [illegible]ying, until 30 minutes ago I did [illegible] know John J. Sullivan existed. He [illegible]comes obsessed with the identifica[illegible] of our [confidential] source.

"Later in the conversation he say[illegible] Mom, 'Do you think your son is the [illegible] one this has happened to?' He closes [illegible] conversation with a promise to per[illegible]ally call President Duarte, 'though [illegible] know it will do no good,' and adds, [illegible] you realize that you have ruined [illegible] night's sleep with the threatening p[illegible] call?'" Muskie, [illegible] really, [illegible] kept his promise to call Duarte.

On January 15 the family receiv[illegible] phone bill logging $700 in long-dista[illegible] calls for the previous week. By [illegible] March the total bill had reached a s[illegible]gering $1,500.)

On January 17 John's father [illegible] dressed Monsignor Clemente Facca[illegible] Washington, D.C., pleading for [illegible] Papal Delegate's intervention. "T[illegible] has been no word from or sign of [illegible] son . . . and we have nothing but [illegible] faith in God to sustain us much long[illegible] he wrote. "While our governm[illegible] pumps millions of dollars in aid t[illegible] Salvador, we cannot get a pro[illegible]

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This is the first time I've ever written something that I hope is never published. If it should appear in the pages of HUSTLER, it probably means my friend and fellow journalist John Sullivan remains missing in El Salvador or has been killed.

Almost every day, newspaper headlines scream of the violence and death enveloping that sad little country. For most people, concern goes no further than wondering what the conflict there spells for the Reagan Administration and the direction of policy and degree of American involvement it will decree.

To those of us who know John (at this point I refuse to refer to him in the past tense), the Central American chaos means something much more personal. It means the fear that a truly remarkable man may be forever lost, or at least swallowed up by the bloody civil war. The gory headlines and grim stories take on a special meaning because of the impact John's disappearance, while on assignment for HUSTLER, has had on us. It is not that John's life is more valuable than that of any of the growing thousands lost in the Salvadoran revolution. But the personal acquaintance with a single victim of a distant struggle adds a new dimension to the tragedy.

In a very special way I take a certain responsibility for John Sullivan's fate. With the best of intentions, I set his feet on the road to freelance journalism. What he accomplished, however, was on his own merit and through his own efforts, and in recent years he accomplished a great deal.

I first met him when we were both working for the *New York Daily News*. I was on the editorial staff in a mixed-duty position, and John was a "proof boy" in the composing room. He was just 19 then. It should be noted that there is often something of a class conflict between journalists and those who make a newspaper a physical reality. Newsmen sometimes view printers as blue-collar "sweats." Printers sometimes see editors and reporters as pompous, overeducated asses. Sometimes they're both right.

More than a little smeared with ink, grease and grime, John was reading *Papillon*, a book I had just finished. He was oblivious to the clatter of the composing room and enraptured by the adventures of escapees from Devil's Island, the notorious French penal colony in South America. We started to talk about the book that spring almost seven years ago, and have remained friends ever since.

I was pleased to find someone with whom I could trade ideas while sharing the good times and gusto of youth. John seemed pleased someone beside himself believed he was meant for better things than smelling of ink, pushing hand trucks bearing lead type around the composing room, and running off story and page proofs for the editors.

As we came to know and respect each other, a night on the town together was always a memorable event—except when we visited one or two bars too many and hardly remembered anything at all. There were many good times, much to my delight and my wife's chagrin.

I wasn't the only one taken by John's warm smile and winning ways. He accompanied me on an interview with Malcolm S. Forbes Sr., the urbane and fun-loving editor-in-chief of the nation's most prestigious business publication, *Forbes*. The financial mogul/balloonist struck up a friendship with him as well.

[illegible] cost of living in his [illegible] John has a great appetite for beautiful women, and usually the assured charm to get to them. A man's man in the best sense of that [illegible] he's sensible enough to [illegible] the simpleminded swaggering of machismo. Still, if anyone could successfully carry off that image it is he.

As fate or God, or any of the other cosmic forces we debated over countless beers in Manhattan bars would have it, a freelance assignment in Kenya, East Africa, came my way in 1974. I was able to convince the appropriate powers that John should go along.

In the company of a group of Hong Kong travel agents on a familiarization trip, we toured the safari lodges and resplendent hotels that dot the Kenya landscape. John's pursuit of a certain young Hong Kong miss rather scandalized most of the travel agents, which in turn, amused us.

To his stunned satisfaction, the entourage celebrated John's 20th birthday with champagne in a colonial-era hotel in Nakuru, Kenya. The only complication was the fact that John, not wishing to be dismissed as a foolish youth, had added several years (anywhere from three to eight) to his age. When I was asked, I didn't know how old I was supposed to say he was.

Later that year we made it to Hong Kong and Thailand, following the steps, accurately but unintentionally, of secret agent James Bond in *The Man With the Golden Gun*. Ensconced in the fabled Peninsula Hotel, 007's favorite in the Far East, John satisfyingly sipped a San Miguel beer and repeated a phrase he used on his birthday in Africa: "Not bad for a proof boy!"

Within a year we were back in the Orient on another freelance assignment. The vast dissimilarity of our personalities is illustrated by an incident in Kyoto—Japan's ancient former capital. Following the example of Buddhist pilgrims who visit the temples and shrines of that city, we wrote on pieces of wood and left them as votive offerings before a centuries-old shrine.

"Let me always do the right thing," I wrote, perhaps in false humility.

"Thank you for letting me be me

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and the big one.

Some months later, on assignment [illegible] Brazil, and I [illegible] [illegible] and the women are probably [illegible]

I'd been dreaming of going to Rio de Janeiro for years, and dutifully informed him that Rio was considered by many to be the world's most beautiful city and the home of some of the world's most beautiful women.

He laughed at that. Rio quickly proved it. He fell madly in love with Brazil, returned several times on business, and made the acquaintance of more than one Brazilian.

John tried with all his will and might to bridge the gulf between the ivory spires of the [illegible] and the paper-packed confines of the editorial department. But the caste system was against him. John knew if he was to find success in journalism, it had to be in the outside world, so he left the *Voice*.

He realized his dream of living and working in Rio, and spent a year there writing for an English-language paper and stringing for publications as far apart as England and Hong Kong. He also wrote articles for the American market.

His ambitions and daring took him to Bolivia to cover the 1979 coup. They say "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," but John is no fool. When he saw dozens of people gunned down indiscriminately by a government plane as it roared over a Bolivian plaza, he exited the country and later wrote movingly of the callous slaughter.

I remember the bitter, painful way he described the discovery of the bullet-riddled body of a young man who had befriended him in Nicaragua, when John was on another dangerous assignment, a National Guardsman's "rape" of a woman, with a pistol, in Managua, the daily body counts of Nicaragua's 1979 revolution.

It was not morbid fascination with death and suffering that convinced John to accept HUSTLER's assignment to investigate the savage warfare in El Salvador. It was his desire to see the reality of a confused and chaotic situation, and to recount it accurately and faithfully to a frequently uncaring

[illegible] of the highest priority, but our attempts to do anything to help him [illegible] of his fate are [illegible] offensive. He has been left [illegible] the tragedy he went to observe and write about.

I was distressed to read the Reagan Administration decided not to press the rightist government of El Salvador to find out who murdered those Maryknoll nuns and the two U.S. labor representatives gunned down in the same hotel from which John disappeared. If the U.S. government is unwilling to "embarrass" the junta with a confrontation over crimes in which it is the prime suspect, crimes that have received rightful attention, how much of an effort can we expect toward learning the fate of a freelance journalist working for HUSTLER? Perhaps HUSTLER's involvement was another explanation for Washington's laxity.

As the days, the weeks, the months go by, hope dims and is resurrected. I am buoyed by the knowledge that a Peace Corps botanist, once written off as dead, was freed after three years of captivity by leftist forces in Colombia, following the unstinting efforts of his mother.

I am dismayed to read daily of El Salvador's continuing carnage, the abandon with which both the Communist-linked revolutionaries and the U.S.-backed rightist government dispatch the general population. Innocent people are being mowed down like so many stalks of sugarcane in the tropics.

Deep inside I fear John has been killed by one side or the other, and yet I hope he is only imprisoned, held captive or hostage. If anyone could come out of that bloodbath alive, it would be John. Not because he is so very brave or clever, but because he has the instincts of a "survivor"—a will to live and an infectious zest for life.

All of us who know and care about him cling to that knowledge and hope and pray his vitality and humanity have survived long enough for myself, I look forward to yet another night filled with cold beer and hearty conversation with my best friend.

[illegible] "The Deputy" [illegible] evening. It seems as though our world is closing in on us and we can't do anything to stop it. In the name of justice and the Holy Spirit, I ask us to determine what has happened to this courageous young American and John J. Sullivan. Please, please help us."

That same day the family asked the U.S. Embassy to run a missing-person advertisements with John's photograph in Salvadoran newspapers, suggesting anonymity for anyone offering information.

On January 18 the family received a phoned telegram from the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador, stating its investigation had bogged down. It advised the Sullivans to hire a private investigator.

On January 19 the family held a press conference at the Overseas Press Club in New York City, begging the American public to write incoming President Reagan and his Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, and ask them to leave no stone unturned in search efforts. "Whatever it costs us, whatever it takes, we will pursue the matter until we find out what happened," Sullivan's mother told a battery of cameramen as tears welled up in her eyes. "I would mortgage my home to get my son back."

On January 25, following several days of phone conversations with the outgoing U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Robert E. White, and representatives of the National Council of Churches, Amnesty International and other groups, the family was outraged by a call from Washington. The State Department was asking the Sullivans to pay $240 a day for the missing-person ads, claiming the U.S. Embassy lacked funds to underwrite them. "It would appear as though we not only have to perform the investigation ourselves, but to finance it as well," Donna Igoe wrote in her log.

By early February she had formed the John Sullivan Action Committee—a pressure group designed to "find out what has happened before it is too late." In just four weeks' time more than 15,000 signatures requesting immediate action were delivered to Secretary of State Haig. The State Department's only response was to dramatically increase military and economic aid to the junta in El Salvador.

A February 18 meeting in Washington with Diego Ascencio, assistant secretary of state for consular affairs, brought

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on the right in El Salvador.

But by the fall of the Shah, Washington had embraced the doctrine of Sullivan [illegible] American form of politics in the region was taking precedence over determining the missing journalist's fate. The new Reagan Administration was intent on making El Salvador the cornerstone of its get-tough policy toward the Communist menace in the Western Hemisphere. It issued a 200-page analysis, along with captured documents, indicating leftist guerrillas had been promised 200 tons of ammunition and armaments from Cuba and the Soviet Union. At least $100 million in new U.S. economic and military aid was being earmarked to shore up the shaky junta. And 54 U.S. military advisers had arrived in El Salvador to help train government troops—stirring uneasy memories of the 60 military advisers the [illegible] page headlines and in depth [illegible] analyses.

The Sullivans read and watched these reports hungrily, searching for a clue that would help them locate their son. The fall of [illegible] The family [illegible] wrong had been done to [illegible] family members. Other than periodic outbursts of anger and rage, John Sullivan Sr. had become uncharacteristically quiet and withdrawn. He had lost weight, and his clothes no longer fit properly. Lorraine Sullivan and her two daughters experienced difficulty sleeping. At 4 a.m. on one of her many fitful nights, Donna Igoe concluded a letter to a HUSTLER editor by writing, "... the night is closing in around me, and in every shadow I see John's image. The agony is unbearable."

But still the Sullivans would not give up searching even the smallest fragments of hope. A week after her brother had been reported missing, Igoe had made contact with a Kansas City psychic. She had sent him several of John's [illegible] were period gave the Sullivans cause for optimism. "Alive. Dark. Se[illegible] tive to others. Jailed," the psychic [illegible] speaking long distance. "Charged [illegible] Small town. [illegible] Small town. [illegible] Near [illegible] There is such a town in that So[illegible] American country, designated on [illegible] map as Lima.

"He's [illegible] his job," the psy[illegible] said. "He [illegible] Could near [illegible] Loss of memory. H[illegible] [illegible] Transferred f[illegible] [illegible] Ecuador. Does he ha[illegible] [illegible] there a girl?"

"No," Sullivan's sister replied. "[illegible] that I know of."

"And [illegible] Peru, near the [illegible] Mountains. Stomach [illegible] problems. Must [illegible] I spot a little. Friend was kil[illegible] Undercover government [illegible] involved. You will hear of his whereabouts or [illegible] not too far away. There is a [illegible] of forced labor near John's location. [illegible] he is not doing forced labor. A tr[illegible] Without realizing it, John has the gi[illegible] some psychic ability."

A second psychic contacted by [illegible] Sullivans—this one living in New E[illegible] gland—was equally positive. Dur[illegible] one of their conversations Donna [illegible] scribbled the following notes: "V[illegible] positive that John's alive. He's in [illegible] ing. Someone warned him of impend[illegible] danger and took him under his co[illegible] He's not only working for the magaz[illegible] somehow there's government inv[illegible] ment. Either that, or the g[illegible] involved, and John is not aware [illegible] Something undercover. Flat word *frigid*. Psychic is trying to send [illegible] to John for some form of contact. [illegible] does not feel him physically sick [illegible] bruised. Says he is isolated."

"Each time I have spoken to the p[illegible] chic, and we've talked four times," [illegible] says, "he feels more strongly than [illegible] that John is definitely alive and safe."

Until something more concrete [illegible] be determined, such disclosures [illegible] have to sustain Donna Igoe and the [illegible] of the Sullivan family. "None of us [illegible] ever be satisfied until we know exa[illegible] what's happened to Johnny," [illegible] vowed, in between appeals for sup[illegible] on a cable-television talk show and [illegible] TV's *Good Morning America*. "In my he[illegible] I feel he is all right. That's the [illegible] thing that keeps us functioning."

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